



Business Update

AWARD-WINNING MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **MARCH 10: GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MEETING**
Time: 7 a.m.
Location: Buckman-Mitchell
- **MARCH 10: BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: Visalia Wyndham
- **MARCH 10: YPN QUARTERLY MIXER**
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: Visalia Wyndham
- **MARCH 11: CHAMBER MEMBER ORIENTATION/UPDATE WORKSHOP**
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: Fresno Pacific University - Visalia Campus
- **MARCH 17: MEET THE FIRE CHIEF**
Location: Component Coffee Lab
Time: 8:30am
- **MARCH 18: COFFEE WITH THE CEO**
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: Mavericks Coffee Co
- **MARCH 26: IMPACT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**
Time: 7:30 a.m.
Location: Visalia Convention Center



VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- **Splendor of the Seine River Cruise:**
Sept. 2-12, 2020
- **Bluegrass Country & the Smoky Mountains:**
Sept. 17-25, 2020
- **Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta:**
Oct. 9-14, 2020
- **Israel: A Journey of Faith:**
Nov. 2-10, 2020
- **Thanksgiving in New York City:**
Nov. 23-27, 2020
- **Culinary Italy/13 Day Tour:**
April 20-May 3, 2021
- **London & Paris Discovery:**
Oct. 19-27, 2021

Collette Vacations, Mayflower Tours
For more information, go to
www.visaliachamber.org/travel

Visalia Chamber of Commerce
222 N. Garden St., Suite 300
Visalia, CA 93291
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The solution to the looming local economic crisis

Dr. Christopher Thornberg recently spoke to a gathered group of Chamber of Commerce executives to discuss the economy, its strengths and potential crisis points. Thornberg, Founding Partner of Beacon Economics, Inc. based out of Riverside, California, is well known in Chamber of Commerce circles for correctly calling the great recession before anyone else saw it on the horizon. Thornberg's no nonsense approach cuts through typical economic and business news chatter providing an approachable look at the health of our economy. A frequent visitor to the valley, Thornberg's forecasts are respected as a trusted source of economic news that are tailored specifically to the Central Valley's unique needs, concerns, and strengths.

As Dr. Thornberg addressed the audience, he quickly shared according to all indicators he watches there is no recession in sight. From low unemployment to GDP growth over two percent, and strong consumer spending, Thornberg is optimistic about our future growth. "Don't fall into the miserabilism." Thornberg cautions. Dr. Thornberg uses the term Miserabilism to describe the philosophy of pessimism or trying really hard to make people think things are worse than they actually are. Thornberg cautions against solely utilizing traditional information sources that benefit from highlighting, or overemphasizing a small component of the economy making readers, viewers or web clicks increase. It important, Thornberg shared, to see the entire picture not just what could be tweaked to increase viewers.

While Dr. Thornberg is generally optimistic about the economy, its direction, and our future, some areas cause him to pause if not an outright concern. Notably, he believes the federal deficit is sharply widening, there's a growing Equity market bubble, and bank lending is constrained.

While those are all things that could impact the local economy, his number one item listed under growing problems, labor shortage, certainly is an issue locally.

Strong unemployment numbers are positive if an economy has enough workers to fill that open positions, Dr. Thornberg explained. The real problem is when there are open jobs that cannot be filled that begin to cause an economic slowdown. Thornberg sees that issue facing the US and California labor markets specifically. For Thornberg, this is an issue of immigration reform and advanced training.



First Thornberg sees immigration reform as a necessity to simply bring more workers into a growing economy. Secondly training those employees to meet the workforce demands of local employers is critical.

Talk to business locally about their pain points, struggles and concerns and finding qualified candidates for open positions tops their lists. Businesses are growing and meeting that workforce demand is difficult, to say the least. This is particularly true if the position needs advanced training, certifications or is technical.

Helping meet local employers' needs, San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC), offers training and educational programs in the medical, dental, business, criminal justice, trades or industrial fields. For over forty years this accredited private college has been working to meet the employment training needs of our community. Starting in Visalia, SJVC now has 17 campuses up and down the state of California with online options reaching well beyond that.

Visalia Unified School District has numerous programs that propel students towards career readiness directly after high school. Students can complete their Associates Degree, become a certified welder, certified AVID editor in addition to receiving tons of real-world hands-on experience. Connecting with employers through programs initiated and managed by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, employers are influencing the specific learning of local students. As students learn the skills necessary for today's workforce, the Visalia Chamber in partnership with your Visalia School District is creating an employment pipeline to mitigate the looming local economic crisis Dr. Thornberg spoke of.

The Visalia Chamber is key player in developing a stronger workforce, advocating for legislation that supports job creation and helping local businesses train their current employees. Dr. Thornberg's cautionary items should not overshadow his overall positive economic outlook. Visalia very much has a bright economic future. 🇺🇸 🇨🇦

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Ostrich Leader Syndrome

Running a business in, what seems to be, an ever-changing climate isn't for the faint of heart. New business regulations are released routinely.

From a national, state or local policies, laws and ordinances, leaders of companies realize that the rules that existed yesterday are likely to change tomorrow. Sometimes it is literally that quick. Keeping up with those changes can be overwhelming. Planning for those changes daunting for even the strongest of constitutions.

How leaders respond to makes or break a company. As a teen, my mother used to tease me that I loved playing the ostrich, burying my head in the sand and pretending something didn't exist. I was well-adapt at looking right at an issue and completely ignoring it. My skills were particularly honed right after dinner when somehow, I would pretend, I didn't see a sink full of dishes I was supposed to wash. Or perhaps more troubling, overlook real flaws and shortcomings of friends rather than having tough conversations or picking better friends. My mother would shake her head, admonish me and say, "There ya go again Gail being an Ostrich." She'd go on to say my ignoring the problem didn't make it better, in fact, it often made it far worse.

As I work with business leaders, I've come to realize this problem exists far beyond the teen years. Business leaders suffer from the same ostrich approach my mother used to warn me about.

Leaders unwilling to acknowledge a change, bury their heads and pretend a law, regulation or policy change won't affect them. They assume they can continue as they have been and somehow all will be right. I understand the fear and aversion to change.

But this approach is deadly.



Gail Zurek
Visalia Chamber
President & CEO

The State of California recently changed the way it classified independent contractors. Sometimes referred to as its assembly bill, AB 5, reduces who can be considered an independent contractor. News media covered this bill often as the Ride Share or Uber bill since the bill aimed at reclassifying rideshare drivers as being employees of Uber rather than independent contractors. How you compensate, provide benefits, account for, and treat employees is different than independent contractors. That change has a big impact not only on a company's bottom line but has a potential rollover effect on how, or if, people have jobs. Much of the bill is being fought in court but the law is in effect now.

Sadly, AB 5 has brought out the ostrich in some local leaders. As I've asked how AB 5 is affecting them, ostrich leaders proudly tell me the bill doesn't affect them. Puzzled, I ask more direct questions about their workforce. And then it happens. I get a blank stare, shoulder shrug and the "well it just won't reach us." Classic Ostrich. AB 5 is the most recent example but isn't the only example I could have used. Leaders sometimes bury their head than deal with the real challenge that's right in front of them.

Don't be an ostrich. When a potential threat comes up, face it head-on. Evaluate (and reevaluate) the threat to your business. Do not be afraid to reach out for help. You are a member of the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. You have powerful tools and resources at your disposal. Have a question, call us. Need more information, attend a workshop. This newsletter is full of information to help you overcome the challenges facing your business. You are not doing this alone. We are here for you. 🇺🇸 🇨🇦

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION ICONS



Catalyst for Change



Community Convener



Champion for Business

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT



Name: Brandy Amaro
Company: Visalia Rescue Mission
Title: Event and Marketing Coordinator

1. How has the Chamber and the Ambassador Program helped you or your business to grow?

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce has created opportunities for me to attend community events, where I get to meet new businesses in town and share a little about the mission with people who may not know about our services. The Chamber monthly breakfast meetings, allows me to talk about the missions upcoming events and needs to so many wonderful community members. The Chamber Ambassadors are like family.



2. Why is it important to employees to get involved in the Visalia Chamber programs and events?

The chamber loves this community and they want all of us to succeed in our business. Every thing the chamber does is for its members, and getting involved in all the opportunities allows each of us to share about are organizations. I have learned and used so many different services that I learned about from Chamber Members.

3. The best part of working for your company is?

The Visalia Rescue Mission is the most amazing place to work. I get to witness first hand life change. The people who come here in need are at the end of their rope, they may feel like they don't have anyone to turn to. We get to be there for them. In my position, I get to share their stories. God works miracles at the Visalia Rescue Mission.

4. Where is your favorite place to go in Visalia with friends and family?

We love going to the Rawhide games. It is such a great place to come together and enjoy baseball and visit. Last season, I was invited to throw out the first pitch as a representative of the Visalia Rescue Mission, it was so fun. My whole family came out to see me barley get that ball across the plate.

About this publication ...

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RIBBON CUTTING



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Ribbon Cutting

Central Valley Pure CBD
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COMMUNITY LOYAL MEMBERS

A thriving community starts here!



NEW

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome our newest members. We encourage individuals and businesses to support Chamber Member Businesses.

Business Builder Member:

- INSITE CONSTRUCTION, INC.

Business Connector Members:

- NIELSEN & ASSOCIATES INSURANCE SERVICES INC.
- ROSE REAL ESTATE GROUP

Small Business Members:

- BOURDETTE & PARTNERS
- CELLAR DOOR
- CENTRAL VALLEY PURE
- CORNER BAKERY CAFÉ
- SEQUOIA RIVERLANDS TRUST
- SUMMIT HOMEBUILDERS, INC.
- THE PAINTED TABLE

Small Business Members Non-Profit:

- AMERICAN RED CROSS OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA
- HOSPITAL COUNCIL

RENEWING

Keystone Member:

- *JOSTENS PRINTING AND PUBLISHING

Cornerstone Member:

- SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON COMPANY

Community Investor Member:

- *BANK OF THE SIERRA - MAIN ST.

Business Builder Member:

- *MISSION LINEN SUPPLY

Business Connector Members:

- COYOTE ENTERTAINMENT CENTER
- GROSS & STEVENS, INC.
- *ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATES MEDICAL CLINIC, INC

Small Business Members:

- CAL-VALLEY INSURANCE SERVICES
- GOLD STANDARD MORTGAGE
- *HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS & SUITES
- *LITTLE ITALY RESTAURANT
- MIRACLE-EAR HEARING CENTERS
- OFFICE DEPOT
- *SOUTHSIDE PLAZA VISALIA NO.1, ACA GEN. PARTNERSHIP
- TULARE COUNTY LIBRARY
- *VISALIA SALES YARD

Business Connector Member Non-Profit:

- TRANSITIONS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Small Business Nonprofit Member:

- *ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

*Indicates membership in the Visalia Chamber of Commerce 110% Club.

MAVERICKS COFFEE COMPANY

COFFEE WITH THE CEO

3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
8-9 AM

THE LUNCHBUNCH
 COMMUNITY • GREAT FOOD • CONNECTION

AW
 ALL AMERICAN FOOD®

Friday, April 10th
 11:30AM-1:00PM
 2611 S. Mooney Blvd

CONNECT WITH FELLOW CHAMBER MEMBERS WHILE SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Kaweah Delta Health Care District has partnered with City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department to bring 13 sporting events for the 2020 Visalia Senior Games, the Central Valley's only Senior Games.

In celebration of its 40-year anniversary, Central Valley Community Bank will award \$40,000 to 40 nonprofits by the end of its first quarter in 2020. They reported their 2019 net income increased .72%.



Decathlon team! They won the Tulare County Academic Decathlon and will represent the county at the state championship.

The Visalia Rawhide recently announced their 2020 Coaching staff: Shawn Roof, Shane Loux, Travis Denker and Carlos Mesa. They also celebrated their 2019 Championship and kicked-off the 2020 Baseball season at the February 3rd Visalia City Council meeting with local fans.

Congratulations to Suncrest Bank! They were ranked as the No.2 fastest growing company in the Valley, a rate of more than 468% between 2016 and 2018.

Congratulations to Juanita Gutierrez of Karen Gross/State Farm Insurance. She was recognized at the 2019 California Team Member Hall of Fame Gala.

The Assistance League of Visalia were invited to Four Creeks Elementary School to put on their production, "Kids on the Block" ©. Third and fourth-graders were provided with skits and a Q&A segment. Assistance League of Visalia received a large volume of 'thank-you' from several classes.

Eagle Mountain Casino recently announced the addition of two new slot machines to the casino floor and the launch of an International Buffet Day every Saturday.

Tulare County Sheriff's Office named Deputy Luis Araujo as Officer of the Year during Knights of Columbus 37th Annual Public Safety Night. Congratulations!



In March, Arts Visalia will display a Women's History Month Exhibition that will feature artwork by Christina Brunk and Abby Rubinstein.

Congratulations to VUSD's El Diamante High School Academic

Visit Visalia announced a new limited-time promotion: "Free Shuttle & Stay". Visitors who book a two-night stay in any of the 16 Visalia hotels will receive two free passes for the Sequoia Shuttle, which includes entry into Sequoia National Park.



Happy Trails recently announced their Therapy Horse, Rootin' Tootin' Ridge D'Lite was awarded the 2020 PATH International Region 11 Equine of the Year. Ridge's small, cute size combined with his big, sweet personality motivates students to walk tall and carry a big attitude.

San Joaquin Valley Homes reported they closed sales on 465 homes in 2019, a record for the company, sold out four of its existing communities and opened seven new ones over the year. Congratulations!

Bank of the Sierra reported an increase of 21% in their 2019 net income, compared to 2018, and recently announced their expansion of business loan services in Northern and Southern California.

Congratulations to Garth Gipson of Gateway Financial Planning Group, who was named to Forbes Best-in-State Next-Generation Wealth Advisors for 2019!

Thank you to Visalia First for hosting our monthly Ambassador Breakfast. They have hosted the Chamber's monthly Ambassador Breakfast for 11 years!



VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kids to College Project

The Kids to College Project is an initiative launched and sponsored by Momentum Broadcasting, G for Kids Foundation, and the Belay Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of these organizations, selected 4th grade students along with one of their parents, will have the opportunity to participate in a free trip to a California college campus to tour the school and learn about college life.

Tamara Ravalin,
Ed.D.,
Interim Superintendent
Visalia Unified
School District



The first trip took place on Saturday, Feb. 15, and allowed 50 students and fifty parents to visit University of California Davis, and 25 students and 25 parents to visit the University of San Francisco. In the months to come, additional trips will be scheduled to tour schools such as:

- University of California, Irvine,
- University of California, Santa Barbara,
- University of California, Riverside,
- University of Southern California, and
- Stanford University.

The goal of the Kids to College project is to bring about change by exposing young students and their parents to the possibilities and opportunities that come from a college education. Students from across the District will have the opportunity to participate. In total, the project is expected to include 600 students and 600 parents. Staff, students, and parents are excited about this project, and VUSD looks forward to working with our partners to offer this opportunity to more of our students.



MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



Name: David Serpa
Company: Kawneer, an Arconic company
Title: Plant Manager

Kawneer is the industry leader in architectural aluminum systems and products. Part of Arconic Inc.'s global Building and Construction Systems business unit, Kawneer Innovation is advancing building and architectural design. Kawneer Visalia has been a part of this community since 1968. We provide customers with a comprehensive product portfolio that includes doors, entrances, framing systems, windows and curtain wall systems. With 130 full-time employees, Kawneer Visalia proudly serves customers west of the Mississippi River for their commercial building needs. You may have seen our doors in malls, auto showrooms, hotels, schools, NFL stadiums and more.

Here's two exciting projects!

- Local project - (Fresno) - California Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District https://www.kawneer.com/kawneer/north-america/en/products/project_detail.asp?project=fresno_kna&bus=north-america&pc=Government_Public_Civic
- Upcoming project - Doors for the new Las Vegas Raiders stadium!

Tell us something interesting about your business or product(s).

With 20 locations across the U.S. and Canada, we provide the following market solutions:

- High-Thermal Performance Products systems designed to provide optimum thermal efficiencies, leading to greater energy conservation.
- Blast Mitigating Products to protect building occupants from the effects of bomb blasts.
- Hurricane Resistant Products that minimize vulnerability to penetration by wind-borne debris during violent storm conditions.

Kawneer has been a long-time community partner in this area. In 2019 alone, Kawneer's parent company foundation gave \$30,000 in grants to our community. A \$20,000 grant was awarded to the Tulare County Office of Education for their STEM programs and a \$10,000 grant was awarded to Goshen Elementary School to continue their efforts to beautify their grounds for the students they serve. Twenty Kawneer employees brought friends, family and neighbors to help plant grass and flowers at Goshen Elementary in September.

The best part of working for Kawneer:

The people! Many of our employees have been with our company for 20, 30 or 40

years. Our employees are the most critical piece to the success we have experienced as a business. Because of the work they do, we can proudly say we are the industry leader in our markets.

Visalia Chamber Seeks Board Member Nominations

The Visalia Chamber Board Nominating Committee is asking the membership to submit names of individuals that should be considered by the committee to join the Board of Directors, July 1, 2020.

All recommended individuals must be part of a Chamber Member business in good standing. Recommendations will be accepted thru Wednesday, February 28th.

Please send all recommendations to Sue Summers at sue@visaliachamber.org with the subject heading "Board of Director Recommendation"



MY BUSINESS JUST OPENED A SECOND LOCATION. HOW DO I SCHEDULE A RIBBON CUTTING?
We love to Champion Good News from our Members. Contact me to schedule a ribbon cutting and visit our website to learn how they typically work: visaliachamber.org/ribbon-cutting.

WHAT EVENTS DOES THE CHAMBER HAVE COMING UP?
Our Impact Leadership Conference is set for March 26th. Early bird tickets are on sale now. But hurry, the sale won't last long! visaliachamber.org/impact

HOW CAN I CONTACT ANOTHER MEMBER?
Through your Member Portal, you can connect with other members directly!

Have a questions about the Chamber? Send me a message: Jena@visaliachamber.org

THE EVOLUTION BEGINS

IMPACT
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

MARCH 26
VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER

JAMES LLOYD
PRESIDENT & SCREENS INTERNATIONAL
INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER

REBECCA HEISS, PhD
CEO/FOUNDER BIOLOGIC BALANCE
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

VISALIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VISALIACHAMBER.ORG/IMPACT

BOARD SPOTLIGHT



Name: Bruce Nicotero
Company: JOANN Stores, LLC
Title: Distribution Center General Manager

Why do you serve on the Chamber Board of Directors?

I was asked to fill a role representing the Visalia Industrial Park. I had previously served on the Chamber Board and was Chairman of the Board in 2004-2005. I have always been active in the community and this is another way I can give back in a way that helps business.

What has the Chamber done in the last 12 months that has helped your business?

This is a tough one because of the nature of our business. The Chamber has provided information about legislation and regulation that may impact us somehow. It's nice to be informed in order to properly plan and make good decisions.

What's your favorite family tradition?

For me it would be Christmas morning seeing the grandkids (and us old folks) opening their gifts.

Does your family have a "motto" – spoken or unspoken?

"Family comes first!"

What was your first job?

When I was 15 years old I "lied" about my age so I could get a job in a small town creamery in Nebraska. They were locally "famous" for their delicious ice cream. I worked in the freezer and eventually graduated to waiting tables in their café. I think I was making about \$1.25/hr.

THE LAW AT WORK

What is "Protected Activity?"



Most employees who have been terminated probably feel like the termination was



Brett T. Abbott
 Gubler & Abbott LLP

"wrongful." Often, they feel like the decision to terminate them was unfair, not handled properly, or done without considering the harm that results to the employee. But legally speaking, what is a wrongful termination? In essence, it's an illegal termination, usually one involving either discrimination or retaliation. This article will focus on the second scenario – cases of retaliation.

To prove a retaliatory firing, the plaintiff must prove that (1) he/she engaged in "protected activity" and (2) that the plaintiff's exercise of the protected activity was a motivating reason for the firing, suspension, demotion, etc. A key question emerges – what is protected activity? What employee conduct can employers not "retaliate" against? The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has provided some helpful examples:

- Complaining about discrimination against the employee or others;
- Threatening to complain about discrimination against the employee or others;
- Providing information in an employer's investigation of discrimination or harassment;
- Refusing to obey an order reasonably believed to be discriminatory or illegal;
- Resisting harassing behavior (The EEOC uses an example of an employee telling a supervisor to "leave me alone");

- Intervening to protect others from harassing behavior;
- Requesting accommodation for a disability or for religious beliefs;

Complaining that pay practices are discriminatory (Per the EEOC, there does not need to be an explicit reference to discrimination. For example, if a female employee says her pay is unfair and asks what men are being paid, such conduct would be protected).

This list is not exhaustive, and there could be numerous other examples of protected employee activity. The list does, however, provide some insight as to what types of activities are deemed protected.

Retaliation claims are very popular with plaintiff's lawyers and are probably the most commonly filed complaints with the EEOC and California's Dept. of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH). As such, if the conduct of an employee can in any way be considered a protected activity, think twice before terminating or suspending the employee. It would also be wise to consult with your HR Manager or an attorney well-versed in employment law before taking any adverse employment actions (suspension, firing, demotion, etc.) following an employee's protected activity.

This article is for education and information purposes only; it should not be construed as legal advice. If you have an employment law question for inclusion in a future article, contact Brett T. Abbott at Gubler & Abbott (brett@thecalifornialawyers.com). For specific employment law advice or other legal assistance, contact Gubler & Abbott (559) 625-9600, 1110 N. Chinowth St., Visalia, CA 93291 (www.thecalifornialawyers.com).

HEALTHCARE NOTE

Expansion, Job Creation, and Continued Growth



Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) opened its first clinic in 1976 in the community of Porterville. In 1989 the Board of Directors



Kerry Hydash

determined it was time to spread FHCN's successful model of care into other communities, resulting in our growth into the Ivanhoe community. This expansion became the first of many that not only addressed the health-care needs of our communities, but also brought hundreds of jobs to Tulare, Kings, and Fresno counties.

Over the years, FHCN has expanded not just in size, but in the range of services provided. The largest period of growth has been in just the last two years. Since 2018, FHCN has opened more than 15 new locations, increased by 11 service lines including adding specialty services, and grown our staff by 72 percent. Family HealthCare Network provides tremendous value and positive impact to our communities by bringing jobs and the economic stimulus that the workforce provides. Despite being in a Health Care Professional Shortage area, FHCN has grown to more than 300 clinicians including, but not limited to: physicians, advanced-practice providers,

dentists, optometrists, and behavioral health providers.

Our continued growth has required (and indeed, will continue to require) Family HealthCare Network to also address the nationwide shortage of most health-care provider specialties and the challenges of recruiting and retaining individuals with these valuable skills to the area. In 2018, through a partnership with the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), Family incorporated a physician residency program for over 300 physicians-to-be. As studies have consistently shown that a high number of physicians eventually choose to practice in the same geographic area where they completed their clinical training, we believe that this program will contribute greatly to keeping these skills in our communities. This addition has worked in tandem with our existing academic programs for training clinicians. Since 2018, FHCN has seen its 8th graduating class of A.T. Still University (ATSU) Medical Students, its 6th graduating class of ATSU Physician Assistant Program Students, and its 3rd graduating class of Dental residents. By providing a space where motivated individuals are able to train and work directly with patients, FHCN hopes to increase providers who stay in our communities.

CITY UPDATE

The 2020 Census



While it's hard to believe it's already been 10 years, the 2020 Census is almost here.

As a member of the Tulare County Complete Count Committee, we've been working side by side with organizations across our community to support the Census

and ensure that our community receives the fair share of federal resources and Congressional representation.

The Census determines California's federal funding for important community services that help support our families and fair share of representation. We understand that many people can be sure of the Census and what it will ask, but the Census is safe and confidential, and only includes nine questions.

The goal is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

Starting mid-month, each household will receive a postcard in the mail informing them of the options for filling out the Census questionnaire. That includes online, by phone, or with a paper form.

To coincide with these national efforts, we're kicking our Census efforts into high gear and invite you to join us. With Census information booths at events across the City, Census 101 fact sheets available at City offices, Census details on social media, our newly launched #VisaliaCounts campaign and more, we invite you to help us support the Census.

To find out how you can support the 2020 Census here in Visalia, visit www.visalia.city/2020Census. We have details on local events, information on the Tulare County Complete Count Committee, resources and direct links to the official 2020 Census campaign. To reach the California Census 2020 campaign directly, contact them at 916-852-2020 or info@census.ca.gov.

The Census determines California's federal funding for important community services that help support our families and fair share of representation in California and Washington D.C. Let's ensure all Visalians are counted so we can put those resources to good use here at home.

To stay connected with the City of Visalia, sign-up for the weekly "Inside City Hall" newsletter, visit www.visalia.city or connect on social media @CityofVisalia.



LEADERSHIP VISALIA

Highlights and accomplishments



- Identify your vision and give it clarity.
- Reinforce your daily affirmations.
- Keep your attention on your intentions.

The Leadership Visalia class of 19-20 kicked off the new year reflecting on the highlights and accomplishments of their work over the last year and asked each participant to consider their vision for what was ahead in 2020. What were they most proud of? Which of their goals were achieved last year? How could they build on those achievements? What was the next level up? What better way to do that, than to create Vision Boards! Creating and using vision boards serves several purposes, some of which include helping you to:

Each participant was given the opportunity to put their creativity to work and put those goals down on poster boards using magazine clippings, slogans and pictures. Each person presented their vision board and shared their goals for the coming year! The evening session was hosted at Fresno Pacific University Visalia campus, and led by Facilitator, Raquel Garcia. Supplies for the evening were sponsored by Amanda Nicks, Owner of Our Place Salon located at 210 N. Floral Street, Visalia CA 93291.



MEET THE CHAMBER STAFF

Name: Gail Zurek
Title: President/CEO

Role at the Chamber: My favorite part of my work is helping local businesses succeed. That means I spend my time troubleshooting, helping businesses move past road blocks, advocating for smart policies, ordinances and government regulations, and creating long term solutions to help keep Visalia the place we all love to call home.

Professional Background: I've always served as community and business advocate. I spent over a decade working in higher education at California Lutheran University and the University of Chicago advocating for students, communities we lived in and businesses that hired our alumni. I was the Area Director for the Better Business Bureau and as a part of that role got to host a radio call in show about consumer and business fraud. I also owned and operated my own communications firm. So I completely understand the feeling business owners have of walking a tight rope without a net underneath. But boy does it feel amazing when you're able to do it.

In another life, I'm pretty sure I was a travel agent. I love traveling, researching and finding "the best" when we go places.

If I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd start a foundation that provided angel funding to local businesses. And, you know, keep working here. (For

real! I LOVE my job!)

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is whatever the mind can conceive and the heart believe you can achieve. But it's really hard to pick just one piece of advice.

If I could invent a holiday, it would definitely involve food. I mean really, any good holiday involves food.

What advice would you give a candidate who wants to join our team of superstars? Working for the Chamber becomes a calling. Serving local businesses, Visalia and constantly trying to do it better than before isn't for the faint of heart. Joining our team means one day you're in the limelight leading and taking out the garbage the next. Our team really cares and pitches in to move our mission forward.

If I weren't so darn good at my job, I'd probably be a business consultant.

Cats or dogs? Dogs! I'm allergic to cats.

My favorite word in the English language is hard to pick because I love words. But honestly I love hearing my boys call me Momma.

What's the most inspiring part of your job? On the microlevel I get to help businesses overcome



Gail Zurek



obstacles and thrive. On the macro, when I help businesses succeed I get to be a part of improving Visalia.

The most important thing I learned before high school was the value of belonging. I have an amazing family and that sense of belonging was a beautiful gift.

If I were a superhero, my superpower would be the power to heal. I have a child with type one diabetes and my constant prayer is for a cure.

When I was 5, I was pretty sure I'd be an inventor. I thought fast food fry packages should have a built in spot for ketchup. I even built a mock one.

Name: Sue Summers
Title: V. P. of Operations

Role at the Chamber: I do the financials for the Chamber, handle the travel program as well as other duties as assigned.

In another life, I'm pretty sure I was pioneer woman who was able to do anything.

If I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd buy the Chamber a small building or house for their own and you know, keep working here.

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is take one day at a time and enjoy the moment.

If I could invent a holiday, it would definitely involve visiting national parks.

What advice would you give a candidate who wants to join our team of superstars? I would advise a candidate who wants to join our team is we are a team and it is important to support each other in all areas of the job.

If I weren't so darn good at my job, I'd probably be a home remodeler.

Cats or dogs? I prefer dogs to cats since dogs are loyal and love you unconditionally.

My favorite phrase is "getter done" because I always want things done way ahead of time.

What's the most inspiring part of your job? The most inspiring part of my job is meeting the great people in the community who get things done.

The most important thing I learned before high school was this too shall pass.

If I were a superhero, my superpower would be to make people's wishes come true.

When I was little I always wanted to do something with paperwork.



Sue Summers

Name: Charlie Saponara
Title: Director of Partnership Development

Role at the Chamber: Bring in new members, sponsorships, and other tasks as assigned

Professional Background: I spent the last eight years as the Assistant GM of the Visalia Rawhide minor league baseball team; sales, marketing, promotions, customer service...

In another life, I'm pretty sure I was a soldier in the Civil War.

If I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd start a marketing consultant company. And, you know, keep working here.

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is if you're going to do it, do it right.

If I could invent a holiday, it would definitely involve baseball. I am a firm believer that Major League Baseball's opening day should, indeed, be a national holiday.

What advice would you give a candidate who wants to join our team of superstars? Have a passion for supporting local business, believe in the Chamber's mission, and enjoy collaborating with others to achieve goals.

Cats or dogs? Dogs.

My favorite word in the English language is family because that's what brings the most joy to my life.

What's the most inspiring part of your job? Being able to tell our Chamber's story - why we do what we do - and make that connection with local business owners.

The most important thing I learned before high school was to be patient with people. To try and see things from all angles and adjust my approach to a conversation accordingly.

If I were a superhero, my superpower would be to heal people.

When I was 5, I was pretty sure I'd be a comic book artist when I grew up.



Charlie Saponara

Name: Jena Rodriguez
Title: Impressions Coordinator

Role at the Chamber: I'm the first person you see when you visit our office. I connect the public with resources while helping our 650+ members apply their membership benefits to their full potential.

Professional Background: I have a background in public relations, communications and customer service. Previous companies and organizations include, the Fresno Chaffee Zoo, Fresno State Office of Community & Economic Development, and Tulare County Library.

In another life, I'm pretty sure I was Antique Picker and Home-Designer.

If I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd start a Full-service dog boutique: grooming, kennel, agility, pet adoption. And, you know, keep working here.

The best piece of advice I've ever been given: we do not know everything and we can continue to learn every day.

If I could invent a holiday, it would definitely involve dogs!

What advice would you give a candidate who wants to join our team of superstars? Must be a multi-tasker and love Visalia!

If I weren't so darn good at my job, I'd probably be website designer.

Cats or dogs? DOGS!

My favorite word in the English language is "will do" because I'm always thinking ahead!

What's the most inspiring part of your job? Meeting the hard-working Visalia business community and trying our best to help them.

The most important thing I learned before high school was learn from our past leader's/ ancestor's mistakes and try to do better.

If I were a superhero, my superpower would be the ability to read minds.

When I was 5, I was pretty sure I'd be a Veterinarian when I grew up.



Jena Rodriguez

Name: Amanda Arreola
Title: Events and Marketing Coordinator

Role at the Chamber: I'm the "fun-raiser"-I plan the Chamber events, handle marketing & communications, Young Professionals Network, and other tasks as assigned

Professional Background: I've spent 5 years in hospitality at two-Forbes Five Star Resorts, 4 years in non-profits: The United States Naval Academy and Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

If I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd buy a sheep farm in New Zealand, start a philanthropic travel company, and, you know, keep working here.

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is never stop changing/evolving. When we stop learning we stop growing.

If I could invent a holiday, it would definitely involve food and travel!

What advice would you give a candidate who wants to join our team of superstars? Have a passion for our community and work well in a team environment. We are a small staff, but mighty. We enjoy collaborating and supporting each other to get a job done!

Cats or dogs? Dogs.

My favorite word in the English language isn't actually English... Fernweh: longing for far-off places, especially those you've not yet visited

What's the most inspiring part of your job? Seeing the impact our Chamber has made on the Community. It's a great feeling knowing each of our roles here in the office contribute to the change, and growth of Visalia.

The most important thing I learned before high school is your friends are a reflection of yourself. Surround yourself with people that inspire and encourage you to be better.

If I were a superhero, my superpower would be healing.

When I was 5, I wanted to own an orphanage so all children would have a home.



Amanda Arreola

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CALENDAR - MARCH 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Government Affairs Meeting, 7 a.m., Buckman-Mitchell Business After Hours, 5:30 p.m., Visalia Wyndham YPN Quarterly Mixer, 5:30 p.m., Visalia Wyndham	11 Chamber Member Orientation/Update Workshop, 10 a.m., Fresno Pacific University-Visalia Campus	12	13	14
15	16 City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall	17 Meet the Fire Chief 8:30 a.m., Component Coffee Lab	18 Coffee with the CEO, 8 a.m., Mavricks Coffee Co	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Impact Leadership Conference, 7:30 a.m., Visalia Convention Center	27	28
29	30	31				

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LEADERSHIP VISALIA

Leadership Visalia explores Visalia's Public Safety

Leadership Visalia explored Visalia's public safety during their February Day Session. The goal of the day was to examine what law enforcement faces on a daily basis and what the community can do to help. The class was hosted at the Visalia Emergency Communications Center (VECC) and started off the day with a tour. The VECC houses Visalia's Fire Administration, IT Hub and acts as a major disaster center.

The day session continued with an introduction into Visalia's public safety by Visalia Police Department's Chief Jason Salazar. The class was presented with crime statistics for the last few years and detailed examples of what police officers experience on a day to day basis. A public safety panel continued the conversation, which included reps from Visalia Police Department, Probation, District Attorney and Visalia's Hope Program. The panel showcased how each department works together to uphold justice and to provide a safe community for all.

In the afternoon, the class had the



opportunity to tour the Visalia Police Activities League (P.A.L.). P.A.L. Officer Art Villareal and a local student provided more information on the program and shared ways on how the community can get involved. The day continued with a presentation by Visalia's Police Department's Community Outreach

Coordinator, Rebekah Jones who shared more information on community programs such as Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out and the Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) unit. To close the day, the class enjoyed a visit from the K9 Unit: Officer Park and Flic who demonstrated their best teamwork and a Q&A session.

AB 51 Limiting Mandatory Arbitration Agreements Ruled Invalid



In an action filed by a number of business groups, including the Chamber of Commerce, challenging the statute as being preempted by the Federal Arbitration Act ("FAA"), Judge Kimberly Mueller concluded that it would be disruptive if the statute went into effect for a brief period of time, only to have it later determined to be preempted. Initially, Judge Muller granted a temporary restraining order ("TRO") to enjoin enforcement of AB 51. Of particular concern to employers were provisions of the law that placed the extraordinary burden of criminal penalties punishable by imprisonment and fines.

The court recently made the invalidation of AB 51 final on Jan. 31, 2020. After further briefing, Judge Mueller issued a preliminary injunction to enjoin enforcement of the new law. Her minute order indicates that a

fuller order explaining her reasoning will be forthcoming.

The next step for the fate of AB 51 certainly appears to be the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. And as Judge Mueller herself originally stated, it may end up in the United States Supreme Court.

What This Means for Employers:

Bottom line, California employers can still have mandatory arbitration agreements, or arbitration agreements with an opt-out provision. AB 51 is not enforceable for now. For any questions or concerns involving arbitration agreements, contact Barsamian & Moody.

The goal of this article is to provide employers with current labor and employment law information. The contents should neither be interpreted as, nor construed as legal advice or opinion. The reader should consult with Barsamian & Moody at (559) 248-2360 for individual responses to questions or concerns regarding any given situation.

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